

A Vindication of the
Conduct of the Present War

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1761



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VINDICATION

Of the CONDUCT of the

PRESENT WAR.

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SPJCH

A
VINDICATION
Of the CONDUCT of the
PRESENT WAR,
IN A
LETTER
TO * * * * *

L O N D O N:

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A

VINDICATION

Of the CONDUCT of the

PRESENT WAR.

S I R,

Berkshire, December 15, 1760.

I AM obliged to you for the favour of your much admired Pamphlet*, and do not wonder that so interesting a subject, treated by so ingenious a writer, should have engaged the attention of the public so far, as to have produced already a third edition. You are pleased to desire my thoughts on

* Considerations upon the present war in *Germany*.

this

this favourite piece, and dropt a hint as if you imagined the doctrines laid down in it, were not altogether so unexceptionable as they are generally esteemed? For my part, I cannot but confess myself entirely of that opinion. It is certainly written with imagination, and indeed with elegance; but whether it be the liveliness of imagination and the beauty of language; or the soundness of judgment, and the strength of reasoning, which have captivated the world, shall be the subject of the following Letter.

The Reader is advanced but a very few pages, before he is struck with a most awful idea of the power of *France*. The extent of country, the number of inhabitants, the vastness of her revenues, are displayed before us as the measure of her strength, and the 450000 men kept on foot by *Lewis* the XIVth is quoted from *Voltaire*, to shew, to what an immense height of power, that kingdom may arrive. This frightful picture representing the prodigious superiority of
France

France over *England*, one would imagine was penciled by some *French* master ; but the truth is, that not only the author of the *Considerations*, but many good *Englishmen* have figured to themselves the same representation of things. Such was the reputation of *Gallic* power, and *Gallic* arms, just before the breaking out of the war, that we have heard brave *English* soldiers wish in publick, that *England* might not be drove to the necessity of measuring swords with *France* : though what gives us a fairer impression of the stamp of those time, is the popular defence of the inglorious and ever to be lamented conduct of him who ought to have rescued *Minorca*. Unhappily too for us, in those days we gave the enemy so much credit, not only for their prowess, but their precautions, that practicable attempts were blasted, by the mere supposition, that so wise a people must have been provided against them.

But

But now that time has proved, this mighty people, are not almighty; nay more, that *English* valour has triumphed both by sea and land in almost every part of the globe; let us enquire into the causes which, under Providence, have operated to produce this wonderful event.

Montesquieu in his *Persian* letters, speaking of the depopulation of the world, asserts that *France* is not to be compared to the ancient *Gaul* described by *Cæsar* for numbers of inhabitants: I believe, I may without rashness affirm, it is not now to be compared on the same account, with itself at the time of the accession of *Lewis le Grand*. The expulsion of many hundred thousand protestants, an industrious, rich, and therefore prolifick people, must have deprived the kingdom of a very numerous posterity. The monstrous increase of their armies, with the fatal consequence of almost a universal celibacy amongst them, is a gulf equal in size to that
of

of the monastick foundations, devouring the present race of men, and obstructing the succession of another. The amazing losses they have sustained in their wars this last century, both in *Germany* and *Italy*, are not reparable under the present constitution of things; and lastly, their refinements and luxury have been carried to such a height, not only at *Versailles* and *Paris*, but even in their distant provinces; that not alone the younger sons of great families, but the merchants and mechanics, amongst whom this polite contagion has likewise crept, are deterred from marriage, and consequently from the means of paying in the fruits of it, that debt every man owes the state where he resides.

That this decrease of people is not visionary, but real, we may appeal to notoriety. I suppose *France* was never more pressed by a war than the present one; then where are now her 450000 fighting men? where are her sailors that in *Lewis* the XIVth's time, fought aboard a hundred ships of war? It

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may

may be answered that we have thousands of their failors in prison, and that their present number of land forces are sufficient for their purpose: but we know that, reduced as their navy was before *November* 1759, they were obliged to force the peasants into that service. We know, that however diminished their armies may be, compared with the flourishing times of *Lewis* the XIVth, still it is with the greatest difficulty the government can pay, and provide for those armies; and were they to resolve the augmentation of them, I am greatly misinformed, or they would be baffled in the enterprize: their revenues would fail them to support the augmentation, and what is more the augmentation itself is impracticable. The dregs of the people and the lower artificers, are already swept away by the recruiting serjeant, and the fields are in a manner abandoned: travel through *France* at this very juncture, and you will see the women not only drive but hold the plough.

The

The revenues of *France* have also suffered a considerable diminution within these few years. The King now upon the throne, is not a *Lewis* the XIVth, the idol of the people; a Deodand; a king, who could not ask more than they were willing to grant; a king who, if I remember rightly, left a debt of above 180 millions sterling behind him, all which he himself had contracted. His present majesty labours under the disadvantage of having seen one great bankruptcy in the late regent's time, and having been under the necessity of committing a kind of act of bankruptcy last year himself; that is, though the payment of the interest on the capital be continued, yet the reimbursements (an annual discharge of part of the capital) were stopt and converted to the current service of the year; these are strokes which must deeply affect credit: the creditor will reasonably suppose at the ensuing year, his dividends will be in the same danger with his reimbursements, and he will not only demand a round

interest but ample security for all future loans; and thus will government be distressed.

It is very certain, that during the long and peaceable administration of cardinal *Fleury*, commerce was not only restored, but increased to a most astonishing degree, and the revenue in consequence, much improved; but never were those channels so dry as at this period: and that the sources of their riches are generally stopt by a ruinous war, is evident both by their breach of faith with their present creditors, and the comparison of their revenues in the last years of *Queen Ann's* wars, made with revenues of the prosperous times of *Lewis* the XIVth. Various causes may conduce to disable a state: *France* is not so powerful as she has been, because so many of her inhabitants are impoverished; and *Holland* is not so able to sustain a war as formerly, though her individuals are richer than ever: the reasoning therefore is not solid, which establishes, that what has been done by any nation, may be done again.

Perhaps

Perhaps, Sir, upon this state of the case, you will think my imagination a little overheated, and that I consider the *French* monarchy as a despicable enemy: Far from it: I admit it to be tremendous; but I cannot acknowledge its Omnipotence. Contingencies may, and have reduced it within some bounds; it is not a Hydra but a Polypheme; and if we can put out his eye, if we can depopulate the country and destroy its commerce, we shall prevent the monster from crushing us. Fortune and success have thus far warranted the experiment of opposing this gigantic power: God knows what a reverse may happen before the game is up; but hitherto the undertaking appears neither absurd nor vain

It remains to consider whether we might have wrought this work by more desirable means; and here I shall have an eye to the principal purport and tendency of the pamphlet before me ——— The grand question upon this point, is, whether we might not
have

have done what we have done, and more, had we not embarked in continental measures : or in other words, whether it would not have been for the interest of *Great-Britain*, to save her millions, and her troops, which have been wasted in *Germany*.

It is undoubtedly the interest of *Great-Britain*, a commercial nation, to avoid war, so far as is consistent with her dignity and her trade : if she submit to affronts, she will be ridiculous, as in King *James* the First's time ; if she submit to encroachments on her territories, she will be undone — Thus circumstanced, it behoves her ministers to be on their guard to prevent a war, if possible, with honour ; or if it cannot be prevented, to support it with spirit.

This I apprehend was the rule of his late Majesty's conduct. When he supposed the Kings of *Prussia* and *France*, were forming designs to light up a war in *Germany*, he entered into a treaty with *Russia* to obstruct these machinations. When the posture of
affairs

affairs changed, and *France* had deserted the King of *Prussia* to confederate with the Queen of *Hungary*, then his *Britannic* Majesty, steddily and uniform in the same plan, changed his measures also, and entered into an alliance with the King of *Prussia* to prevent any foreign troops from marching into the empire.

I know these sudden starts of friendship from one Potentate to another, have been supposed to betray a weakness in our councils ; but that is begging the question ; alliances are not personal but national ; and no body doubts it was the impatience of the house of *Austria* to seize on *Silesia*, that led her to break the treaty of *Aix la Chapelle*, and fling herself into the arms of *France*, and not any variableness of humour or system in his Majesty ; but his honour, his glory, and his interest, induced him as guarantee of that treaty, to support it.

It were much to be wished, if it were not weak to wish it, that *Germany* and other powers

powers would fight our battles ; but the Considerer has declared that unless we will meet them there, the *French* will seldom or never give themselves the trouble of marching into the empire. Surely the author is a little forgetful in this assertion : is it not true to a proverb that *Germany* has proved a grave to the armies of *France* ? does not the last war furnish us with a recent example, when she poured into the empire, a hundred thousand men even to the gates of *Vienna*, before one *English* regiment was embarked for the continent ! But why do I appeal to the last war for an instance ? have we not one still more recent before our eyes ? were not *French* armies in the very bowels of *Hanover*, before one *English* soldier had set foot on *German* ground ? be it so, say many well meaning men ; let their armies domineer, ravage, and take possession of it. *Hanover* is too small an object for our attention ; and the fee simple of it, is not worth half the number of millions, we must spend to maintain it :
but

but is this the reasoning of wise and virtuous men? was the Electorate still of less value than is here represented, and had not the maxims of sound policy called upon the administration to act the part they have done; would not the ties of honour, gratitude, and justice, bind us to endeavour the rescue of a wretched people suffering all the calamities of war from an insolent foe, merely on our account?

We remember the legislature were touched with so deep a sense of the duty of this measure, that they unanimously, and with the approbation, at that time, of all good *Englishmen*, engaged to defend the electorate: but, says the Considerer, if the two houses of parliament were so improvident; now, that the thing is impossible, the engagement ceases; because no promise binds to impossibilities. The thing impossible? God forbid! the precedents in history are numerous, where able generals with a few good troops have baffled the most formidable invasions——

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The undertaking of prince *Ferdinand* though a bold one, in the event has thus far been found a practicable one.

It may be answered, the absurdity of the attempt would have appeared last year, but for mere accident; and that such victories as that of *Minden* fall not within the scope of probability. All this is true; but had there been no such battle, who can tell what might have been the fate of that winter's campaign?

Is it impossible that the *French* army at so great a distance from home, quartered in an enemy's country, and harraßed by troops full of ardour and patriotiſm, might have ſuſtained a loſs nearly equal to the deſtruction they met in the fields of *Minden*? I am not romantic enough to hope I ſhall ever ſee ſuch another Day as the firſt of *Auguſt* 1759: however, ſtupendous that victory was, it was not ſupernatural: no uncommon phænomena in the heavens, the air, or the earth contributed to that ſignal overthrow: the few *Britiſh* battalions which oppoſed the
ſhock

shock of the numerous *Gallick* host, stood intrepid and firm : the enemy trembled and fled.

Happy for *England*, the spirit that shone forth that day, has not been confined to those six battalions : it has diffused itself equally through our navy and army ; and the glorious 1759 is almost forgot in the glories of 1760—I should therefore flatter myself the cause of *Hanover* is not at so low an ebb ; prince *Ferdinand* is not yet reduced to beg quarter : but should the fortune of war, by and by, declare itself against us, then will be the season to withdraw our troops, and relinquish the country we can no longer protect : we shall then have the consolation to reflect, that we have acted as an upright and faithful ally ought to act, and that by employing almost the whole power of *France* upon that spot, we have diverted them from objects of higher import ; in other words, that by throwing this *Hanover*, this tub to the

whale, the ship we swim in, has been less endangered.

But we are told, that *Hanover* does not ask our relief: for by sending an army to oppose the *French*, she is oppressed by two armies, and her misery doubled; nay farther, that when she was over-run with a rapacious soldiery, and in *French* bondage, the sun neither refused to shine nor the rivers to flow. I shall only observe upon this flower of speech, that these appearances of nature continued to subsist, even after the desolation of the poor *Palatinate*: though, to pursue the metaphor, did not the poor inhabitants find the rivers to flow with waters of bitterness? and were not the day-light and the sun, painful to them? But we are informed the *French* are a fair enemy, and that the maxims of war since the establishment of christianity, are become so moderate and humane, that *Hanover* had been pleased to have remained in the quiet state of their
neutra-

neutrality (which the sad necessities of the times had constrained her to sign) but that the victory of *Rosbach*, and the arguments of the King of *Prussia*, had prevailed upon the army of observation to take up their arms again.

This is a heavy charge against the memory of our late dread Sovereign, who avowed and justified the infraction of that treaty; who gave his honour that the forms of the convention had been broke by the *French* themselves, in the extortions and oppressions, practised in violation of the articles of the treaty. Could this be said by a King so renowned for the love of truth, and we doubt the truth of it? but the writer himself seems to admit the allegation. If, says he, the Duke of *Richlieu* was extortionate, did not this General render himself odious by his excesses, and did not some of his own officers condemn him by a contrary behaviour? he allows too, that some officers are more rapacious than others, and the *Hanoverian* had then the mis-

mistfortune of having the *French* army commanded by one of the worst of them : can we desire a more ample proof of the sacredness of his late Majesty's word ; a virtue for which he was revered when alive, and now that he is no more, will not fail to procure him the admiration of future times ?

But granting the truth of these oppressions, he thinks it would have been more prudent in *Hanover* to have submitted to them, than to have deserted the neutrality. Good God ! are not *Hanoverians* men ? have they not flesh, and blood, and feeling, and spirit too, like other Men ; do not our hearts glow within us when we peruse a * *Vertot* or a *Buon-amici* ? and is the recovery of oppressed liberty at *Genoa* or *Lisbon* nearer our hearts, than the same same cause at *Hanover*.

We cannot however produce so irrefragable an argument in vindication of the political conduct of his late Majesty, and his

* *Vertot* and *Buon-amici*, two authors ; the first, of the revolutions of *Portugal* ; the other, of the last war in *Italy*.

ministry, as in admitting the proposition to be true, that though *Hanover* could not suffer in the least by the neutrality, and might suffer extremely by the infraction, nevertheless the convention was broke on our side.

Who can invent a stronger plea in favour of his late Majesty's honourable and just regard for the good of these realms, than in thus exposing his native country in these happy circumstances to the horrors of war; and the resentment of an exasperated enemy; who if victorious might and would have treated them as revolters and rebels? If his Majesty did decline the acceptance of peace for his electorate, in order to keep the storm for his *British* dominions, what tribute is due from *Britain* to his ashes? Does this sacrifice favour of the partial attachment, or, as the *French* call it, the predilection in favour of *Hanover*, so generally ascribed to his character? Like a good hearted man, he loved the place of his birth; but like a just
and

and virtuous King, he ever supported, to the utmost of his power, the interest of these kingdoms.

I hope from this review of the transaction relating to the convention of *Closter-Seven*, you are persuaded that when the convention was broke, the good faith of his late Majesty stood unimpeached: whether the consequences, politically speaking, were for the interests of *Great-Britain*, I shall examine more minutely by and by: at present, it remains to be considered whether our union with the King of *Prussia* be a wise or a weak measure.

It will be no part of my enquiry what are or are not the personal virtues of the King of *Prussia*. His magnanimity and universal genius stand confessed to the whole world: but it is with the crown and power of *Prussia*, that we are allied; though I grant it is no slight justification of the alliance, that the power of that crown is lodged in such able hands. Nor shall I examine how far this

war

war may be deemed a protestant war : no wise man ever seriously thought it so, and indeed it seems to me a subject only worthy of trifling politicians.

It has been a question much agitated for many years in this kingdom, whether it be for the interest of *Great-Britain* to depend singly on her own strength, or to engage in friendship and alliance with the neighbouring states of *Europe*, according to the circumstances of affairs. The first system has been generally adopted by men out of power ; the second by men in power. The reason I suppose is, that every minister has found the expediency and necessity of entering into these compacts. The nature of an extensive commerce requires it, and the preservation of the balance of power renders it almost unavoidable. *France*, our rival in peace and war, has within these three last centuries, taken prodigious strides towards universal dominion, and probably would have accomplished her great work, had not *Britain*

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interposed to obstruct her. And is *France* less ambitious and less lustful after empire at this day than she was formerly? Does it not then equally behove us now, to watch her steps? What can induce her to impoverish her subjects, and exhaust her finances by the payment of so many foreign subsidies, but the hopes of availing herself of these subsidiary Princes in some seasonable hour, to the enslaving her nearest neighbours first, and afterwards in her turn, *Great-Britain*. This has been her policy, and by these arts she has extended her monarchy. Powerful as she is within herself, would she sit down tranquilly to cultivate the social blessings of peace, she would seldom or never be annoyed by others. It is then with the prospect of annoying, that she pursues this plan; and it is the notoriety of the fact, that at times has armed almost all *Europe* against her designs.

It has been well considered since the revolution, that one of the principal causes that
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conducted to the universal monarchy of *Rome*, was, that the several states of the world fought the *Romans* one by one, and therefore were all subdued. Hence arose the several confederacies that have been formed against *France*, in all which, *England*, as became the dignity of a great and opulent nation, has generally taken the lead: and now, it is this very system of fortifying herself against the ambition of *France*, that induced her to enter into an alliance with *Prussia* and *Hesse*. What have been the fruits of this alliance? the preservation of the electorate, and the dominions of the King of *Prussia*. Had we not supported him with subsidies, he must inevitably have sunk under the weight of his expences: had he not won the victory of *Rosbach*, and by that victory dissipated in a manner for some time, the *French* power in *Germany*, the army of observation had not alone (without the assistance of a body of *Prussians*,) been able to

drive out and extirpate the forces, that were in possession of *Hanover*.

Perhaps it will be asked, where lies the advantage of these events? How would *England* have suffered, had all the dominions of his *Prussian* Majesty, and the whole electorate of *Hanover* been swallowed up the first campaign? I shall answer in a few words: *France* in that case, would not have sustained the hardships of two or three expensive, sickly, and mortal campaigns, which have diverted her thoughts from the other operations of the war, and would also have had the deposit of *Hanover* in her hands, to exchange for our own acquisitions, or with that power who should give her the best bargain for it; possibly with the Queen of *Hungary*, for the perpetual possession of those territories and maritime towns in *Flanders* that lie opposite to our coast, and which would be extremely convenient to the marine of *France*, for infesting *England* in a future war.

But

But why this eagerness to support the King of *Prussia*, a Prince, who in the last war is said to have been a perfidious enemy? Why do we not renounce an alliance, that grows so heavy on our hands?

What a manifest contradiction is here? The same man, in the same breath, arraigns one Prince for breach of faith, and recommends the example to another. Wise and good ministers however, know that these engagements are of too solemn a nature, to be lightly renounced; and whatever the cause of the King of *Prussia* was, in the last war, the justness and uprightness of it in this, have been demonstrated in his documents, nearly with the force and precision of a theorem in *Euclid*.

The writer of the pamphlet before me, seems to be unnecessarily concerned for the honour of his country, in supposing
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we are dupes to the King of *Prussia*, by the convention we have made with him. The succours we have given him in money, he calls a tribute. He had much more properly have called it a charity, had he attended to the wretched and miserable state of *Prussia*, set forth in the preamble to the articles of the Convention : but the truth is, that it is given to an ally, who has been and may again be useful ; and therefore is really and truly a subsidy.

By the convention, the King of *Prussia* engages to augment his forces, and that they shall act in the most advantageous manner for the common cause : but says our author, he does not stipulate to send one man to our assistance : yet in what better terms could he have expressed himself ? At a juncture when he was overwhelmed with enemies, and
had

had employment for a hundred thousand more troops, could he have enrolled them, would it not have appeared ostentatious and ridiculous to mention an aid of men? Neither of these epithets belong to the King of *Prussia*.

I could have wished that the ashes of the late Landgrave of *Hesse*, had been trod on more gently; as he was a Prince both in publick and private life, great almost beyond example. So true to his faith, and his engagements, that he chose rather to abandon his country, and live a fugitive, than desert his alliance and the cause of liberty: unkind therefore is the representation that we read of him, as delivering up his principality and people to an enemy, for the paltry consideration of the hire of his troops. These are the outlines of a *Muley Ishmael*, and not of *William*,

William, Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, one of the best of men *.

Thus I have endeavoured to explain to you in some measure, the expediency of framing these alliances, and the necessity of supporting them. That they have cost us some millions of pounds, and some thousands of lives, is not to be denied—These are the sad accounts we must read of in the history of war; but does not the same page inform us, that while poverty, oppression, ruin, and desolation, are raging in other countries, we are in a manner enjoying the sweets of peace. Our commerce extends itself every year, beyond

* It is related of *Muley Ishmael*, that when *Louis the XIVth* upon a certain provocation, sent an ambassador to menace him with a bombardment, he coolly asked him what the equipment for the expedition would amount to: so many millions of livres, answered the ambassador; why then, says the *Morocco* Emperor, give me but security for half the money, and I will this moment burn the town before your face.

beyond the strength of imagination to have fancied ; our revenues consequently increase, and, to compleat all, our people are hitherto content. I shall possibly be told that these are blessings but of short duration, and that we must ere long, fall under the burden ; but it should appear from the riches of the state, that we are far from so great a crisis—twelve millions raised at about four *per cent.* in one loan, argues no such danger nigh, and is a transaction, that will amaze *Europe*, and possibly may extort overtures of peace from our enemies : but as an honourable peace is not at present in our option, we must continue to exert that force, which, if they had been reasonable, would have already compelled them, but which under heaven, must in the end compel them to it.

What were our prospects when we first engaged in this war? our enemy had en-

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encroached on our colonies, built fortifications
 on their encroachments, and rendered our
 possessions insecure—A good frontier there-
 fore to our northern colonies, was the grand
 object. Wise men were also become jealous
 of the formidableness of the naval power of
France, and were not sorry for the quarrel,
 as it might furnish an occasion to reduce
 that power: so the reduction of the navy,
 became the next great object——In the
 course of a very few years, we have seen
 the vigour and impenetrable secrecy of a
 wise administration, seconded by the extra-
 ordinary valour of our officers and men both
 by sea and land, accomplish this noble
 undertaking. Their navy is not only reduced,
 but almost annihilated; and we are masters
 not only of the frontier we combated for,
 but also of *Louisbourg*, and the vast and
 powerful regions of *Canada*; powerful, con-
 sidering

sidering the force that could be brought against it.

It would not be necessary to mention our conquest in the *East* and *West-Indies*, our success at *Senegal* and *Goree*, and the frequent alarms we have given to their own coasts, but that I mean to assert, that in all probability, had the war been carried on in another shape, few or none of these things had been effected.

Had *France* in the beginning of the war, declined all continental connections; had she dedicated but half the millions, and half the men she has wasted in *Germany*, to her marine; had she turned all that strength to the support of her colonies, and to the invasion of *Great-Britain*; the scene had been altered, and the posture of affairs had worn another face. It is not pertinent to alledge, that *Hawke* had destroyed her

squadrons, and ruined our power at sea: this is confounding dates and arguments. He obtained that glorious victory upon the remains of her navy in *November 1759*; but had she adopted the system I speak of, in the beginning of the war, *Monf. Conflans* might have commanded sixty ships of the line, instead of the twenty-one which perished or escaped that day.

I know it will be said that we still must have triumphed at sea, had *France* done her utmost to contend for an equality: but that a navy is to be created; much more, augmented in a few years, may be learnt from the administration of *Colbert*. Does any man doubt that the navy of *France* in King *William's* time, at a certain period, domineered in the channel, and locked up the navy of *England* in our own ports? if this
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be true why should not the same direction of power produce again the same effect.

Admit however, that in spite of all rivalryship, we should still remain superior at sea; yet when we reflect on the excessive distance of our settlements from *Britain*, and from one another, what embarrassments must ensue from the impossibility of discovering the destination of their several squadrons? we remember well how nearly *Monf. de la Clue* had escaped admiral *Boscawen*, and notwithstanding the fortune of that day, in preventing his junction with *Monf. Conflans*, how difficult we found it to give *Hawke* a superiority over *Conflans* alone. Such are the calls for our men of war, either for our convoys, our colonies, or our expeditions, that notwithstanding the prodigious number of ships in commission, we cannot possibly be provided with sufficient fleets, to preserve a superiority in every service.

I shall be answered, that granting all this to be true, yet as we shall still upon the whole be stronger at sea than our adversary, she will never be able to hurt us essentially : and therefore all the millions devoted to continental measures, have been so much of the riches of the nation idly dissipated and lost : but however self-evident this proposition may appear, I am humbly of opinion that had not those millions been appropriated to the service of *Germany*, the other millions that we have expended so gloriously in *America* on the grand object of the war, would have been squandered, and the conquest of *Canada* defeated. I am informed by unquestionable authority, by some of the principal instruments employed in that honourable enterprize, that had the *Canadians* received but a very little assistance more from *France*, than they did, the undertaking had been rendered impracticable. Can we then

then suppose, that if *France* in the beginning of the war, had turned her thoughts from *Germany*, to the defence of her colonies, she could not have sent a little more assistance, nay very considerable armaments both of ships and men? in this case, the important scheme which engaged us in the present war, must have proved abortive. If therefore what I have advanced here, be a fact, those two or three words only, will be an answer to volumes of declamation, against the present conduct of the war and continental measures.

Happy for us, the councils of *France* have taken another direction; but I have very good reasons to believe, that had Marshal *Saxe* been living, and in power, we had beheld a different scene of action. By his death, the *French* have been suffered to follow the bent of their national genius, which undoubtedly is martial; but *Mars* not
Nep-

Neptune is their deity. The toils which wait on the splendours of the field, do not startle their nobility, and gentry; but the ocean has not equal charms for them. I have been told in *France*, that this observation on the humour of the people was one of the causes which induced *Lewis* the XIVth to neglect his marine, after the action near *Malaga*.

I do not mean by what I have here said, to reflect on the abilities and courage of their officers or common men. I am only advancing, that providentially for us, the service at sea is not their predominant passion. I know but too well, from the behaviour of their navy since the revolution, how capable they are of becoming formidable on that element; and I think it is from that quarter only that *England* can receive her mortal wound.

Had the system of Marshal *Saxe* been vigorously pursued from month to month,
and

and year to year, I am of opinion our island would not have known the tranquillity she has enjoyed during the course of this war. I suppose you are prepared to smile at the word invasion; men less knowing than yourself, laugh aloud at the bare mention of it; but the gentlemen of the army and the navy, know it is not a phantom, and might prove a serious affair. Can any man treat the attempt as chimerical, who remembers that if *Hawke* had been wind-bound forty-eight hours longer than he was, the troops from *Vannes* under the convoy of *Conflans*, had certainly failed for the destined port. If therefore, it was a kind of accident that saved us in the zenith of our power, from the mischiefs of an embarkation, convoyed by the poor remains of a shattered navy; how would the danger be enhanced, should the *French* monarchy once more grow powerful at sea, and threaten us at the same junc-

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ture with three squadrons from *Havre de Grace*, *Brest*, and *Dunkirk*, and an army of ten or fifteen thousand men aboard each of them ; all which will certainly be practicable in a future war, if the *French* King has no other business on his hands, and should adopt this method of attack ?

I am apprised that, flushed as we are in our present security from invasions, it may be argued that should the *French* by favour of winds and weather disembark an army, every man of them must in the end be destroyed or made prisoners. This is an experiment that I hope *Great-Britain* or *Ireland* will never undergo--The fortune of a battle is precarious, and yet in an open country like ours, the fortune of a battle may possibly decide the fate of a crown. History informs us that it actually has done so more than once in this nation : but why do I allude to times of antient date? do we
not

not all remember 1745, when only five or six thousand undisciplined rebels marched into the center of the kingdom, and had well nigh blasted public credit! nay, and with a little more success than they had, might almost have made the imperial diadem of these realms to totter on the head that wore it? can the truth of this assertion be called in question? did not the voice of the people, did not the acts of the legislature in a manner proclaim his Royal Highness the Duke of *Cumberland* the restorer of his country!

But *England* perhaps is under circumstances entirely peculiar to herself. She not only is unprovided of garrisons to obstruct the rapid progress of an enemy, were he once landed, but the very life and being of her publick credit would be affected by that event. Foreigners have but a faint conception, and our ancestors had no conception

at all of the nature of this publick credit. What speculative statesman could have believed that the plunging this nation into a debt of a hundred millions, instead of producing a general bankruptcy should have enriched thousands of her inhabitants, and procured a comfortable subsistence to the many more thousands dependent upon them? yet mysterious and paradoxical as this appears, it is the present case of *Great-Britain*. The immensity of her trade enables her to keep faith with her creditors; and whilst that faith and that trade can be supported, the imaginary value of her paper will be equal to the intrinsic worth of her gold and silver. Thus are the real riches and current coin of this kingdom, I may say almost infinitely multiplied. Yet consider upon how slight a thread this wonderful prosperity depends, and that should it happen to be divided, the mighty machine must inevitably fall. So
long

long however as the interest of money shall continue to decline, the evil of the debt will be at a distance ; but a descent of twenty or thirty thousand men, might possibly bring on instantaneous ruin. Of how great consequence then, is it to divert the storm from this island ?

I am afraid you will not be quite satisfied with this strain of reasoning : you will tell me it is still the most expensive war that ever *Britain* was engaged in, and that if she goes on at this rate mortgaging all her possessions, she must be undone at last. I grant it is expensive, but may not this generous effort, this spirit which has spread itself from the throne to the lowest class of the people, prove in the end as parsimonious a method of carrying on the war, as the more languid one, of saving a few millions and making no impression on the enemy ?

In

In the nature of things, it can seldom happen that one and the same plan of operations is steddily pursued thro' the course of a long war. New occurrences arise, which give birth to new systems and measures. I am apt to believe that three years ago, the administration did not themselves foresee they should send so large a body of troops to *Germany* : but I hope you will think from the review I have laid before you, the step was prudent and productive of great good : the good however consisting in the prevention of an evil, which would have arisen from different measures, is understood by men of penetration only : the inconveniences, are obvious to the whole world.

I do not wonder, that after the sword has been drawn so many years, the nation at length should be desirous of peace : yet what is to be done ? we have declared ourselves

selves ready to treat, and our propofal has
 been rejected with difdain. Are we, in our
 triumphant fituation, to creep to the enemy?
 Are we abjectly to fue for ignominious
 terms of peace? Shall we inglorioufly fur-
 render the advantages we have obtained at
 the price of fo much blood and treafure?
 If we do this, can it be long ere we fub-
 mit to the yoke itfelf? No, Sir, I hope
 ftill to fee the pride of *France* subdued by
 the fpirit of *Britain*.—For that end there-
 fore, let us with *Cato*,

- § Hold it out, and fight it to the laft :
- § A year, a day, an hour, of virtuous Liberty,
- § Is worth a whole eternity in bondage.

I am, Sir, &c.

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Falkner-Grenson

